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AUTHOR	Bennett, J. Phillip; Gage, Martha S.; Craven, Lonnie; Morrison, Gail
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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how the 2000 standards of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) can be used in state accreditation standards to promote accountability. It describes standards 1 and 2: candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions and assessment system and unit evaluation, then presents a few examples of non-test evidences of teacher competencies, which include performance of candidates in field experiences, candidate work, student learning, follow-up of studies of graduates, and relationship to the conceptual work. It also presents a more extensive list of expectations and requirements for South Carolina, Kansas, and NCATE. Finally, the paper focuses on how the use of NCATE standards take test scores into account for accreditation decisions; whether NCATE standards can be fairly applied to all types of institutions, public and private; and what protocol issues need to be considered to ensure the appropriate involvement of all stakeholders, focusing on Kansas and South Carolina. (SM)

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Using NCATE 2000 Standards as State Accreditation Standards: A Beginner's and a Veteran's Approach to Accountability

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Lonnie L. Craven

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J. Phillip Bennett, Ph. D.
Associate Dean
The Teachers College
Emporia State University
Emporia, KS

Martha S. Gage, Ph.D.
Director, Certification & Teacher Education
Kansas State Department of Education
Topeka, KS

Lonnie Craven, Ph. D.
Director of Teacher Education
Division of Teacher Quality
Columbia, SC

Gail Morrison, Ph.D.
Director of Academic Affairs and Licensing
Commission on Higher Education
Columbia, SC

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Using NCATE 2000 Standards as State Accreditation Standards: A Beginner's and a Veteran's Approach to Accountability

How will the use of NCATE standards move accountability beyond test scores?

Accountability and test scores and beyond are at the heart of NCATE Standards 1 and 2. For the reader's convenience these standards and their corresponding elements are listed below:

Standard 1 Candidate Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions
Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates
Content Knowledge for Other Professional School Personnel
Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates
Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Candidates
Professional Knowledge and Skills for Other Professional School Personnel
Dispositions for All Candidates
Student Learning for Teacher Candidates
Student Learning for Other Professional School Personnel

Standard 2 Assessment System and Unit Evaluation
The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the unit and its programs.

Assessment System
Data Collection, Analysis and Evaluation
Use of Data for Program Improvement

As a background, Kansas has used the NCATE standards as its accreditation standards for about 15 years and South Carolina is just now making a similar recommendation to the State Board of Education. Both states have a partnership with NCATE that uses a single joint team to review NCATE institutions.

Important factors to BOE team members regarding Standards 1 and 2 are the comprehensiveness of the institution's assessment system, validation of candidate performance, the process for making decisions about candidates, and the process for making decisions to improve programs. Team members will want to see evidence that test scores are used to make decisions about candidates and programs, but an institution cannot expect a "met" recommendation unless the assessment system goes beyond test scores. Following are a few examples of non-test "evidences" and a brief explanation of team expectations.

Performance of candidates in field experiences - This should include assessments of university and school faculty. Evaluation forms used for this purpose should include knowledge, skills, and dispositions and be clearly related to the unit's conceptual framework. South Carolina requires assessment of ten performance indicators but that does not excuse an institution from documenting that the conceptual framework is either assessed by those indicators or that the unit has supplemented required State assessment with items which will include the conceptual framework.

Candidate work - Traditionally institutions have provided samples of good candidate work. Team members will want to see some of the best student work but they will want much more than that. Team members will be even more interested in seeing a range of candidate work with documentation as to how it was evaluated, what decisions were made about the candidate, and whether remediation was provided. In other words, how is candidate used to make decisions about the progress of candidates and to make decisions about program improvement?

Student learning - PK-12 student learning is not simply evidence gathered by candidates on pre/post tests. As with candidate work, teams are looking for something deeper than this and something that can even be attained without pre/post tests. The key word here is "reflection." There should be evidence that candidates have reflected on their lessons, identified problems or successes with student learning, and decided what could have been done to improve student learning.

Follow up studies of graduates - This has always been required of institutions and team members will expect to see data collected from graduates. Once again, the data will be of interest but even more important will be what has been done with the data. Who has reviewed the data, have program changes been made as a result of the data, and can improvement in the program be documented because of changes?

Relationship to the conceptual framework – There is really nothing new here. An institution can create a great assessment plan, include all of the important assessment tools, and use the collected data effectively, but still get a "not met" recommendation if there is no relationship to the conceptual framework.

The chart below is a more extensive list of expectations and requirements for South Carolina, Kansas and NCATE. As can be seen by the chart, the two states are veterans or beginners for various aspects of data collection.

As assessment tools in the chart are reviewed and discussed, questions institutions might ask include: Who is involved? How is data collected? How are decisions made about candidates and programs? What is the relationship of assessment to the conceptual framework? How are candidates made aware of the assessments used and they impact? Providing an interpretation of data and documentation of candidates' performances will take institutions beyond test scores. In that case the BOE team is likely to recommend that standards 1 and 2 are met.

Assessment	Veteran	Beginner	NCATE
NCATE Unit Standards used as State Standards	Kansas	South Carolina	Not required
Test Scores			
• Subject area content knowledge	South Carolina	Kansas	Standard 1
• Professional and pedagogical knowledge	South Carolina & Kansas	NA	Standard 1
• National assessment of basic skills	Kansas	South Carolina	Standard 1
Beyond Test Scores			
• Performance of Graduates	South Carolina	Kansas	Standard 1 & 2
• Conceptual Framework	Kansas	South Carolina	Standard 1 & 2
• Student learning (e.g., Teacher Work Sample, Portfolios, Reflection)	NA	South Carolina & Kansas	Standard 1
• Assessment by candidates, cooperating teachers, university supervisors	NA	South Carolina & Kansas	Standard 1
• Candidate Performance	South Carolina	Kansas	Standard 1 & 2
• Techniques used to assess candidate work and samples of good and not so good candidate work	NA	South Carolina & Kansas	Standard 1
• Assessment System	NA	South Carolina & Kansas	Standard 2
• Required by NCATE (regardless of the stage of the NCATE transition plan) Admissions Data Internship assessment data Licensure test data Follow-up studies	South Carolina & Kansas	NA	Standard 1 &2

How does the use of NCATE Standards take test scores into account for accreditation decisions?

While certainly part of the decision-making process, the use of test scores by NCATE's Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) in making accreditation decisions about teacher preparation programs is affected by several factors. For the most part, these factors include the degree to which institutions have implemented NCATE's Standard 2, test data that is used as evidence for Standard 1 and the overall quality of information provided through institutional reports (IR), BOE reports, and institutional rejoinders to the UAB.

For full accreditation approval, the UAB expects teacher preparation institutions to meet all six unit standards. However, it is important to note that the UAB has developed a transition plan (2001-04) for the full implementation of *Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation* that impacts institutional assessment plans. Institutions are expected to "phase in" implementation of assessment plans over a four-year period. Therefore, accreditation decisions made by the UAB during the four-year implementation period will consider the transition plan schedule so that institutions are not penalized for less than full implementation.

Moreover, in order to meet NCATE's Standard 2, institutions are expected by the UAB to have a well developed "assessment system that collects and analyzes data on the applicant's qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve

the unit and its program." Institutions are expected to provide a clear description of their assessment system, including detailed information on how and what data are collected, analyzed and evaluated. With most states using standardized tests to license beginning teachers, guidance counselors and school administrators, the use of basic skills and content tests will become a significant component of institutional assessment plans. Standardized test data such as the Praxis series are important to the UAB because they correlate with and encourage alignment of unit and program standards. Consequently, standardized test data is helpful in evaluating the continuum of educational experiences from a beginning teacher to the professional teacher.

The second factor affecting the use of test scores in making accreditation decisions by the UAB is the use of test score data for Standard 1. This standard requires an institutional assessment to measure the candidate's knowledge, skills, and dispositions in meeting state and national standards. While multiple evidences will likely be provided, the UAB expects that teacher preparation institutions will likely use standardized test data as evidence of candidates' content and pedagogical knowledge. Again, national standardized series tests may be sources of data used as evidence. In meeting Standard 1, institutions must also provide individual and summary test data to the UAB.

Third, several other factors come into play before an UAB accreditation decision is made about an institution. The UAB must rely on information available in institutional reports, on-site BOE team reports, and institutional rejoinders. Ideally, all of these reports will contain ample, detailed information (candidate data and summary data on candidates) that will help the UAB to make an appropriate accreditation decision about an institution. However, if the quality of any of these data sources is less than ideal, then the UAB is handicapped to some degree by not having the "best" information on which to make an accreditation decision. For example, not enough detailed information, including test score data in the IR, will affect the quality of the BOE report. The BOE report, if not well written, may affect the institutional rejoinder. With time, training and additional experience, the quality of information provided to the UAB should improve.

Thus, the NCATE standards require a complex assessment plan as well as multiple sources of evidence for demonstrating that standards are met. While the UAB would not rely on specific test score data on which to make an accreditation decision, a lack of data from several sources could lead to a negative UAB decision. Therefore, the UAB is interested in high quality, and multiple, test score data provided by teacher preparation institutions through the IR, BOE report and rejoinder.

Can NCATE standards be fairly applied to all types of institutions, pubic and private?

Kansas has 22 institutions that prepare teachers and seek approval to do so through the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and, in some cases, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). NCATE accreditation is voluntary in Kansas, but all institutions, public or private, large or small, that wish to recommend someone for a license must receive accreditation from the Kansas State Board of Education. Currently, there are 13 (7 public and 6 private) institutions who are jointly accredited, three institutions (all private) who are candidates for joint accreditation and six institutions (all private) that are considering the possibility of becoming NCATE accredited. For the last 15 years, Kansas has been a "partner"

state with NCATE. That means that the standards developed by NCATE are used as state accreditation standards. All institutions, whether seeking NCATE accreditation or not, and no matter their size or whether public or private, must meet these standards.

Institutions in Kansas range from one having 18 students to one with 1692 students in teacher education programs. Some institutions have only two teacher educator faculty in their entire department and some have six or more administrators who guide the work of the unit. Some institutions have extensive graduate programs, other institutions may offer only one or two graduate programs and several institutions offer only initial programs. Some institutions are in large urban settings and others are in very small, rural settings. Eight institutions are controlled by state or federal regulations while the other 14 are governed by a board of trustees or board of directors usually closely affiliated with a religious denomination.

With as much variability as states have among their institutions, what kind of benefits and problems occur in each type of institution as they seek program approval or accreditation? In small, independent colleges one typically finds fairly good communication and cooperation between the teacher education unit and the liberal arts and science faculty. In this small setting many encounters occur each day between the two faculties with opportunities for discussion and elaboration. There seems to be a greater understanding that the success of the teacher education unit in the institution correlates highly to the success of the institution as a whole. While the content faculty in smaller institutions tend to be more supportive of the process for program approval, there still exists some tension because the state is dictating standards and assessments for the content area. The private, independent colleges are protective of their ability to work as a private and independent entity.

In larger state universities, collaboration and cooperation between the two "colleges," teacher education and liberal arts and sciences, must be more deliberate and focused. Sometimes there is less enthusiasm and opportunity for working together and not as much emphasis on needing a successful teacher preparation unit for the success of the institution. Therefore, the teacher education unit must plan and organize some way to meet with the content faculty and secure their support. Many Kansas' larger units have set meeting times between the college of education and the content area faculty. The units attempt to keep the content faculty informed by these meetings so that as requirements change, there are no surprises to the content faculty.

With smaller institutions, while collaboration and communication is easier, the generation of ideas and the workload is heavier for faculty and administrators in teacher education. In the smaller institutions communication is of an informal variety so it becomes much more difficult to document when decisions are made. Where a large institution has committees that have agendas and keep minutes for meetings, with a small department the decision-making process is likely to be done in a conversation between the two teacher educators who have administrative responsibility. It is more difficult to track how a decision occurred and at what point in time. In addition, there is difficulty in generating an array of ideas when fewer individuals are available. For smaller institutions, it means that those in charge of the unit must be well versed in research that supports ideas and must be willing to go beyond the ideas that are narrow, provincial and out-of-date.

The larger institutions have more human resources to dedicate to organization and problem-solving, but there is also the problem of getting the diversity of ideas and territorial interests to work together into a focused vision. Large teacher education units have many, diverse opinions and it takes administrative skill to get individuals to work toward a common goal and replace self-interest with the interest of the whole. Then, too, to bring faculty and administration from different colleges in a university and get them to share responsibility for training teachers is often a difficult task. In some larger institutions, the teacher education advisory committees have been chaired by individuals from liberal arts and sciences and have a preponderance of members from the content areas. In that way, those individuals have a vested interest in ensuring that future teachers are well prepared for teaching.

Another concern is the variability in unit resources related to budgeting. Traditionally, teacher educators in the small private colleges earn considerably less than do their counterparts in the larger, state universities, although no faculty are overpaid. For the most part, however, there is a commitment and dedication to the students and mission of the institution for faculty at smaller institutions. It is impossible to say that faculty from the larger institutions do not have the same depth of caring or concern for students, but, and often because of the religious influence in the smaller institutions, there is a loyalty to the institution that is unique. There are always concerns about issues surrounding the availability of a library rich with resources, professional development for faculty and technology for faculty and students. And, although this is a concern for all institutions, frequently fewer resources and less technology exist in the smaller colleges even though they work diligently to provide learning and research opportunities for students.

Changes in the NCATE standards, been a challenge for all institutions. The need for collaboration between teacher education and content faculty is critical for this change. All faculty, whether from teacher education or from the content areas, must learn about performance assessment and what is being required for NCATE standards. However, with every problem at large or small institutions, there are solutions if individuals are willing to work together.

What protocol issues need to be considered to ensure appropriate involvement of all stakeholders?

South Carolina's State partnership with NCATE arose out of a slightly different context than most of the other partnership states. In fact, one of its major stakeholders, the higher education community, was the initial leader, through the auspices of the state's coordinating board, the Commission on Higher Education (CHE). The CHE conducted a year-long program evaluation of education program offerings by the eleven public institutions, utilizing external consultants prominent in discipline areas (e.g., early childhood; elementary childhood; etc.). Following the first such review in the mid-eighties of several hundred programs in education, including initial and advanced programs, the CHE confronted a major disconnect between the much more negative findings of its own external reviewers as contrasted with the relatively benign findings of the State Department of Education (SDE) program approval process.

As the first step in effecting badly needed and substantive positive change in education programs, the CHE imposed a moratorium of several-years duration on all new program requests and required that weaknesses and deficiencies cited by its reviewers be corrected with extensive reporting of progress back to the Commission being required. The refusal to entertain any new

program requests in the education fields was unprecedented in the state; it got everyone's undivided attention. Concurrently, the five (of 11) public institutions accredited by NCATE, continued their lament concerning the needless duplication of effort. To use a Winter Olympics metaphor, no sooner had they sped around the ice track for one approving body, virtually as soon as they crossed the finish line, out of breath and exhausted, they had to line up for the next race: SDE, NCATE, and then, CHE again.

Uncharacteristically, and much to everyone's surprise, there was sympathetic to this lament, despite a firmly held belief that something significant had to occur to improve education programs. In 1992-93, CHE and NCATE began discussing a State Partnership program that could meet the needs of the higher education coordinating board; in 1993-94 CHE required that all public institutions would become NCATE accredited by Fall 1999. NCATE accreditation was a condition of obtaining initial approval for any new programs, whether or not, in education. The fact that NCATE approved institutions had fared much better in CHE's program review than had the non-NCATE accredited institutions had not gone unnoticed.

Simultaneously, CHE engaged SDE in discussion about establishing a three-way partnership (after all, if Florida could manage surely South Carolina could too), and in October 1995 that partnership was approved. The University of South Carolina at Columbia volunteered to be a pilot institution under the new partnership, which enabled the state to learn more about what had "Nike-esquely" plunged right into. Just do it, and it was done—wrote the protocol and sent it out review; took lot of notes about what needed clarification and what needed to be learned; conducted State Board of Examiner training; served on BOE teams.

On the higher education side of the house there was significantly empowerment from three pieces of state legislation that focused on public higher education. Act 629 of 1988 required that each institution establish a program to measure "institutional effectiveness," and by the mid-nineties some campuses were deeply immersed in this work. Act 255 of 1992 was an "accountability" report card requirement for higher education, which, among its many components, strongly encouraged institutions to seek specialized accreditation. Finally, Act 359 of 1996, better known as South Carolina's performance funding legislation, attached actual performance dollars to the institutional report card; an institution lost money if it offered programs that were not accredited. Sometimes the planets do align.

Today, not only are all 11 public institutions NCATE accredited, but also six private institutions are as well; two others institutions are in candidacy status. The State Board of Education, upon the recommendation of a task force of public and private institutional representatives, has recently adopted the NCATE 2000 standards as the State Board of Education's accreditation standards. The site visits of a joint team conducted under the three-way State Partnership protocol along with the UAB decisions merge the three different review processes. While supplemented in relatively minor ways by the State Team members, the NCATE process serves as both the SDE and CHE program review. This means just once around the ice track, not three times back to back.

Certainly one of the challenges in developing the initial and subsequent protocols was to have it reflect appropriately the program approval processes of the two boards involved, the State Board of Education (SBE) and the CHE. Jurisdiction of each of these is slightly different. CHE

approves all requests from public institutions for all new programs, evaluating issues such as need, justification, resources, and capacity. The SBE approves only initial programs that lead to certification (e.g., licensure) for all public and private institutions and is more concerned with curriculum than is CHE. Aligning the decision-making powers of these bodies with NCATE's was an early challenge. For example, how does NCATE "probation" translate into SBE or CHE action with respect to the unit or to its programs?

Process challenges concerning clear instructions pertaining to the flow of materials to whom and in what number and by what date were continuous, and not the least of those was "training" NCATE to the relatively rare model of a three-way partnership. Feedback from institutional constituents who are the primary users of the protocol is vitally important. But perhaps the most difficult challenge has been persuading legislators about the value of the NCATE partnership and its related processes. Although progress has been made, this challenge is one that hasn't yet been met successfully, in this writer's judgment. The protocol itself, as the primary articulation of this relationship, is too dry and tedious a document to apply to this purpose, however important its outlining of vital process issues may be. The standards are much more compelling, but even as excellent as they are, they do not keep individual policy-makers from what might be called "piggy-backing" or "piling on" with respect to particular (perhaps pet) issues. Actual training in the standards is much more powerful, and South Carolina has had fortuitously some success involving key policymakers or their staffs in "technical assistance" workshops on the new standards.

However, the flexibility of the protocol can be both a blessing and a curse. In the final analysis the protocol is flexible enough so states can add to it unique issues, as South Carolina has done in the instance of having SDE team members review the state induction program or the CHE team member review program productivity standards. Certainly there are practical limits as to what can be accomplished in a relatively short site visit, so one of the challenges with respect to the protocol is trying to keep the "add-ons" to a manageable number with the focus on substantive rather than trivial tasks. That is, the standards need to speak and not have the equivalent of a separate review added on at the back end.

These challenges were, are, and will be again, but the race around the ice track is never the same each time around. Following approval of the NCATE 2000 standards, NCATE revised the State Partnership Agreement packet. The new expectations are clear: partnership states and NCATE will have to show how they will work jointly to collect, analyze and share data on candidate performance for purposes of NCATE accreditation and state approval. In addition, states are expected to increase the alignment of their program approval standards, as well as state licensing standards, with those of the NCATE affiliated professional associations. A first step in this process is the requirement for states to file an addendum to their existing protocol that articulates the process states will use to notify NCATE if a "change in state status" of an institution occurs. Prompted by the advent of the Title II report card, the move to performance-based licensure, and outcomes-oriented accreditation, the challenge to the post-NCATE 2000 state partnership agreements will be to link data to program to licensure.

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Organization/Address: SC Dept. of Education	Telephone: 803-734-8944	FAX: 803-734-3012
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